



# Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 40

May, 2011

**Starting in May, our offices will be closed on Wednesday afternoons instead of Tuesday afternoons. Our new office hours are:**

**8:00 - 11:30am and 1:30 - 3:30pm Monday to Friday  
\*Closed on Wednesday afternoons, weekends, and holidays.**

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## Special points of interest:

- \* New Local Rules for Pets
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## Preparing For Summer Travel

Summer holiday time is almost here. If you are planning to travel please read the following suggestions to help ensure a stress-free trip.

### Know your passport expiration date.

The passport validity of a child under 16 years of age is only five years compared to an adult passport's 10-year validity. **Some countries (including China) will not allow a traveler to enter the country if the traveler's passport will expire in the next six months.** Airlines will deny boarding to those who do not meet this requirement. For further details about visas and the entry and exit requirements of the countries you plan to visit, please visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

### Plan ahead to renew your passport.

Passports are printed in the United States and not at the Consulate. For this reason, **passport applications generally require 10 days to process.** This does not include the time to secure a visa from China or another country, or other unexpected delays. Please visit our website at [http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport\\_renewals.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport_renewals.html) for information regarding passport renewal requirements, and to make an appointment with the Con-

sulate. It's never too early to renew your passport; most people find it best to apply at least 6 to 12 months before expiry.

### Register with the Embassy/Consulate in the country where you will be visiting.

The Department of State encourages U.S. citizens living overseas or planning to travel abroad to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>. By enrolling in STEP, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements and will also make it easier for the Embassy/Consulate to contact you in the event of an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date; it is particularly important when you enroll or update your information to include a current phone number and e-mail address.

### Inform Your Family/Friends of Your Travel Plans:

Tell those you trust about your travel plans, including your transportation, hotel, and local contact information, so that they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency. Keep a copy of your passport and China visa not in the same place you keep your passport.

## Upcoming Holidays And Other Closures

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer waiting times. If you visit us outside of these times, you should have a shorter wait. A full list of all of our holiday closings is online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>. The Consulate will be **CLOSED** on the following days:

**June 6, Monday:**

**Dragon Boat Festival** (a Chinese holiday) (端午节 Duān Wǔ Jié)

**July 4, Monday:**

**Independence Day** (独立日 Dú lì Rì)

## Automatic Two Month Extension For Taxpayers Residing Overseas

U.S. income tax returns were due on April 18. If you reside overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., you are given an automatic two month extension to file (until June 15, 2011). If you are unable to file your return by the due date, you can request an additional extension to October 17 by filing Form 4868 before the return due date (to determine if further extensions are available go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)). However, any tax due must be paid by the original return due date (April 18) to avoid interest charges.

Note: Payments are not considered received until the date of actual receipt by the IRS, not the postmark date.

Taxpayers generally use the yearly average exchange rate to report foreign-earned income that was regularly received throughout the year. If you only had a few foreign transactions on particular days, you may prefer to use the exchange rates for such days. Exchange rates for returns are listed on websites such as the Federal Reserve and the Financial Management Service (FMS) website. Commercial sites, such as OANDA may also be used.

Federal tax forms may be downloaded online at: <http://www.irs.gov>

State tax forms are available on: <http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/link/forms.html>

In addition, please be sure to check out these helpful tools:

- Brochure 4732, Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad is available at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf>

- A "one stop shop" tax page dedicated to helping the overseas taxpayer can be found at: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>

- For routine tax return and preparation questions, you may call the International Taxpayer Help Line in Philadelphia at (215) 516-2000.

## Travel Warnings And Alerts

*Security reminder: It is advisable that you and your family review your personal security profile and to be aware of your surroundings at all times.*

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries:

<u>Syria</u>	04/25/2011
<u>Uzbekistan</u>	04/25/2011

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html).

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

<u>Japan</u>	05/16/2011
<u>Bahrain</u>	05/13/2011
<u>Worldwide</u>	05/01/2011
<u>Egypt</u>	04/28/2011

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This information is available at :

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1766.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html).

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and prohibited items on flights can be viewed online at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans\\_1252.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html). Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site designed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.

## News: Dog License Fee Reduced By 75% In Bid To Collar City Pets



Dog owners are to pay 500 yuan (US\$77) a year to license their pets under new regulations - a quarter of what many were previously charged.

The city pricing authority revealed the figure for the new fee on May 13.

That, together with Shanghai's first law governing the keeping of dogs, comes into effect on May 15, 2011.

According to Shanghai Daily, pet owners welcomed the reduced charges.

"I've so happy that my little Yorkshire terrier will have a license soon," said Wang Chen, a dog owner who did not previously buy a license and had to

dodge checks.

Wang told the Shanghai Daily that the 2,000 yuan license was too expensive.

City legislators believe the lower license fee will encourage more dog owners to register their pets.

While there are 140,000 licensed dogs in Shanghai, police estimate there are at least 600,000 without licenses.

Under the new policy, dog owners living within the Inner Ring Road pay 500 yuan for a license.

Those outside the Inner Ring Road pay 300 yuan and those live rural areas are charged 100 yuan.

Owners who have their dogs sterilized pay half the fee, according to the policy.

City police will be the main government body supervising the scheme.

Money raised will go toward city or dis-

trict government income and details of how it is used will be available to the public.

**Foreign residents will come under the same rules as Shanghai residents, including the "one household, one dog" policy.**

This permits residents to keep only one dog. The only exemption is for households that already have licenses for more than one dog.

With the cheaper license comes greater responsibility for pet owners.

Under the new rules, an owner who fails to keep their pet on an appropriate leash - it can be no longer than 2 meters - or clear up after it can be fined up to 200 yuan per violation.

Owners whose dogs endanger public safety face fines of between 5,000 to 50,000 yuan, under the new rules.

*(From Zha Minjie, Shanghai Daily)*

## Safety & Security On The Streets Of Shanghai

### Tips to Stay Safe in the Traffic

- Wear a helmet on a scooter/ motorcycle/electric moped
- Wear a bike helmet when you're on a bicycle
- Wear a seatbelt (the front seat of most taxis have a seatbelt)
- Cross streets carefully. Look both ways – often vehicles go the wrong way on one-way streets.
- Don't try to enforce traffic laws or traffic signals by putting yourself in the path of a vehicle
- Get a receipt from the taxi driver

Sure, traffic here often goes at a slower pace than in a lot of places back home. But whether your skull hits the pavement / vehicle / immovable object at 10 mph or 40 mph the effect is about the same! Please be safe!

### New Scam Targeting Expats

Although anecdotal evidence supports the following information, the PSB (Police Security Bureau) has not provided official notification regarding warnings listed here. This information is being provided to alert American citizens of potential criminal activities.

Recently multiple people from different parts of Shanghai have reported themselves to be the victims of a scam targeting expats. The victims were stopped by a "PSB officer" (sometimes more than one) on the road (usually near a spot like western styled restaurants frequented by expats) and asked to show their passports. When they couldn't produce them, they were asked to pay a penalty of 500 RMB.

Some victims have checked with the PSB and confirmed that the person who they had encountered were NOT real PSB officers. The following precautions are recommended in case you find yourself in the same situation:

1. If stopped by a "PSB officer", ask to see his/her police card (警官证 Jǐng Guān Zhèng). If the "PSB officer" cannot produce it, you will know that he/she is not real.
2. It is possible that one could be asked by a PSB officer who is checking passports. In this case, if there is an issue, they would take you to a PSB office and would definitely not ask you to pay a fine on the spot.
3. If they keep asking you to pay a penalty on-site, call 110 for the police. They have an expat service.



## News: Foreigners May Face Rail Ticket Delay

According to Shanghai Daily, foreign rail passengers may need more time to buy bullet train tickets in local booths once a "real-name" booking policy is introduced later this month.

Unlike Chinese passengers who can just show their personal identification (ID) cards, foreigners need to provide passports or other documents, according to the policy issued by railway authorities. "The information on these documents will require more time for the ticket booths to verify and input," a railway official, surnamed Dong, told Shanghai Daily at Shanghai Railway Station on May 13, 2011.

Dong added that not all railway staff, unlike their airline counterparts, are proficient in English and other foreign languages, which could lead to misunderstandings.

The real-name ticket buying system, which is aimed at curbing rail ticket scalping and improving security, comes into effect on June 1 throughout China.

All bullet train services prefixed by the

letters "G", "D" and "C" require passenger ID to buy a ticket.

There are 23 types of documents recognized by the ID system. Foreigners can buy tickets using their passports, temporary residence permits, exit-entry permits or diplomatic certificates as identification (ID).

One certificate can only buy one ticket for one trip, rail officials said. Passengers should also show the certificates and tickets when boarding the trains.

From 3pm on May 22, passengers can use their accepted IDs to buy rail tickets with a boarding date of June 1. "It will be a little bit inconvenient," said Laura Imkamp, an American student at Shanghai Fudan University.

Imkamp said she often buys railway tickets for friends and that it is risky to give passports to others.

To speed up the process, Dong advised foreign passengers to use **residence permits**, which are issued by local police and easy to recognize, instead of passports, which vary from country to country.

At one rail ticket outlet in downtown Jing'an Temple, staff said they may input the numbers of foreigners' certificates, instead of names which may be "hard to spell."

If foreigners fail to carry their certificates, they need a letter from their consulate to prove their identities and go to railway police for temporary certificates, authorities said.

Rail officials stressed that automatic ticket machines at railway stations will only recognize Chinese residents' ID cards. But passengers with passports can book tickets via a hotline at 95105105.

*(From Zha Mingjie and Zhao Wen, Shanghai Daily)*

## News: Six Overstayers Get Deported

Six foreigners from Southeast Asia and Europe, who were caught by police during a crackdown on group renting, were deported for overstaying their visas after serving detentions, the Shanghai Exit-Entrance Administration Bureau said on

on Apr. 27, 2011.

The six foreigners shared a 30-square-meter apartment on Xiangyang Road. Neighbors frequently complained

they made noise. Police found folding beds on the balcony and in a corridor. None of them had jobs here and their visas had expired at least six months ago.

*(From Shanghai Daily)*

## Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally joined the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), please do not forget to end your enrollment when you leave.

You can end your enrollment by visiting the <https://travelregistration.state.gov> site if you previously enrolled through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form to the U.S. consulate, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to:

[ShanghaiACS@state.gov](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov).

## Reminder: Appointments Mandatory For Routine ACS Services

As the number of U.S. citizens residing in and visiting our Consular District (Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui provinces) has grown rapidly in recent years, the number of people who come to the Shanghai ACS office for consular services has grown just as quickly. In light of this and our limited physical space, we must strictly enforce our mandatory appointment policy for non-emergency services. The objective of this policy is to reduce customers' wait time (especially during high demand periods) and to reduce crowding in our waiting room.

The ACS unit has had a mandatory appointment policy since 2009. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit -- please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website: <http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov> or <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn>

We have a one-in/one-out system to accommodate a limited number of people who are unable to make an appointment or who need a service prior to the first available appointment. Each person who arrives without an appointment must wait outside our office until the previous person without an appointment departs. We try our best to accommodate as many customers as we can each day. Because the time required to serve a customer varies widely (depending on factors like the complexity of the service, amount of data-entry and data-verification required, etc.), it is not possible to predict how long a person without an

appointment will wait to be served. If you come without an appointment, your wait might be twenty minutes or more than two hours. If you arrive without an appointment and there are already many others without an appointment waiting ahead of you, you may be asked to return to our office at another time/day. This helps explain why we much prefer that every customer make an appointment (even though we allow one person without appointment at a time to come into the section for a non-emergency service).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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The following services do not need an appointment:

- Report an emergency or urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, or arrest of a U.S. citizen)
- Report a passport lost / stolen / damaged when you urgently need to travel outside of China -- bring proof of impending travel. (Note: lost/stolen passports must **immediately** be reported to the Exit-Entry Bureau, a unit of the Chinese police.)
- Register with the Consulate or Register to vote (both easy to do online)
- Pick up passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and/or Re-Entry Permits
- Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks
- Follow up on a case for which you have already paid -- Must present your receipt and/or your "Please Note Checked Items" letter.
- American Citizens' Visa Hour at 4pm on Tuesday.

## News Release From IRS Targets Overseas Taxpayers

IRS announced on February 8th, a new initiative to provide another opportunity to taxpayers who are still hiding money offshore to come forward and settle their tax obligations with their government. The IRS is offering people with undisclosed income from offshore accounts an opportunity to participate in a new, voluntary disclosure initiative in order to get current on their tax returns. The 2011 Off-shore Voluntary Disclosure Initiative (OVDI) will be available only through Aug. 31, 2011.

The 2011 initiative has a higher penalty rate than the IRS's previous voluntary disclosure program, which ended on

Oct. 15, 2009, but offers clear benefits to encourage taxpayers to disclose foreign accounts now rather than risk IRS detection and possible criminal prosecution. In addition, the 2011 initiative includes new guidelines to provide fairness to people with smaller amounts of undisclosed assets or unusual situations.

For general details on the initiative, see <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=235695,00.html>

For more details on the 2011 initiative, including contact points, mailing addresses, please go to <http://www.irs.gov/compliance/enforcement/article/0,,id=205909,00.html>.

## Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General,  
Shanghai, China

1038 West Nanjing Road, 8/F  
Westgate Mall 梅龙镇广场

(Méi lóng zhèn guǎngchǎng)

Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650

Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

After Hours Emergencies:

(86-21) 6433-3936

Open 8:00am - 11:30am

and 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Monday to Friday \*Closed on  
Wednesday afternoons,  
weekends, and holidays.

<http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov>

## Foreign Service Officer Test to be offered in Shanghai in June

Have you ever thought about joining the Foreign Service? According to one of the recent surveys the Department of State is number four in the list of desired employers! The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai will conduct the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) in early June. To sign-up, please visit <http://careers.state.gov/officer/selection-process>. To learn more about the work of a Foreign Service Officer or other career opportunities with the Department of State, please visit <http://careers.state.gov>.

Please note the following test dates:

*June 9: 1pm to 4pm*

*June 10: 1pm to 4pm*

*June 11: 9am to 12pm*

*June 11: 1pm to 4pm*

## Vacancy Announcement – Foreign Service Consular Adjudicators Excellent Opportunity for Chinese and Portuguese Speakers

Under a new pilot program, the Department of State plans to hire twenty “Consular Adjudicators” as Limited Non-Career Appointments (LNA) in an effort to meet exploding visa adjudication needs in high-growth countries such as China and Brazil. The program’s goal is to meet targeted consular staffing needs.

The pilot program aims to hire around 20 U.S. citizens who are already language qualified to serve limited, non-career appointments (up to five years) in Brazil and China. Language proficiency and U.S. citizenship are prerequisites.

The LNA adjudicators will be fully qualified consular officers who have gone through a stringent assessment process. However this is not an ‘alternate path’ into the Foreign Service. Anyone

selected to become a Consular Adjudicator who wishes to become a career Foreign Service Officer (generalist or specialist) will have to follow the normal entry procedures for those positions.

The announcement is available on <http://careers.state.gov>.

